



9 Important Facts About COVID-19 Booster Shots at VA

There has been a lot of talk about booster shots for COVID-19 vaccines. While the vaccines developed to fight COVID-19 have been shown to be safe and highly effective at both preventing the disease and lessening the effects in breakthrough cases, experts believe receiving an additional dose can provide further protection. To reduce confusion, VA presents you with 9 Important Facts About COVID-19 Booster Shots at VA.

1. What is a booster shot?

A booster shot is an additional dose of vaccine, given several months after the first series and timed when antibody protection is falling, with a goal of “boosting” antibodies and protection.

2. What is the difference between a booster shot and an additional/third dose for immune-compromised people?

A booster shot is a supplemental dose of the same vaccine given to groups whose immune response has weakened over time. An additional/third dose for immune-compromised people following an initial vaccine series is given to those who may not have a strong enough immune response after receiving the initial vaccine series. In August, VA began offering third doses to people who are moderate to severe immune compromised and received either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines.

3. In what order will booster shots be distributed?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommends** booster doses for individuals who are in high risk groups, and states that **they may be offered** for other groups depending on individual risk. VA will follow CDC recommendations and will start by reaching out to certain populations who are at highest risk.

4. Who is eligible to get a booster shot at VA?

VA will offer boosters to staff and Veterans receiving VA care; and, as supply and capacity permits, additional Veterans, spouses, caregivers and CHAMPVA recipients under the authority of the SAVE LIVES Act.

5. Will VA contact me about receiving a booster shot?

Veterans who fall in the population recommended by the CDC for Pfizer-BioNTech booster shots will be identified through the VA's Veterans Outreach Tool, then contacted and advised of the recommended booster shots, which may be offered by appointment or walk-in basis.

6. When should I expect to get a booster shot?

At least six months should elapse between the second shot of your initial series and your booster shot.

7. Will boosters be available for each vaccine?

Currently, only the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been approved for booster shots. FDA and CDC continue to review data to determine whether and when a booster might be recommended for recipients of the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine(s). VA will plan to offer these booster vaccines when they are authorized by the FDA and recommended by the CDC.

8. Can I get the Pfizer-BioNTech booster shot if I first received the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen shot?

The CDC and FDA recommends that booster shots be of the same type and manufacturer as the initial mRNA vaccine series. This means that individuals who received a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine should receive a booster shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

9. Can I get the booster shot and the flu vaccine in the same visit?

Flu vaccines are recommended for everyone and can be given on the same visit with COVID-19 vaccines.

Haven't gotten or finished your first COVID-19 vaccine series yet? VA is still offering initial COVID-19 vaccines. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine lowers your risk of severe illness from COVID-19, including hospitalization and death, even with the current circulating Delta variant of COVID-19.

For more information, please go to [VA's COVID-19 Vaccine Questions site.](#)

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